

Saskatchewan's independent newsmagazine

BRIARPATCH

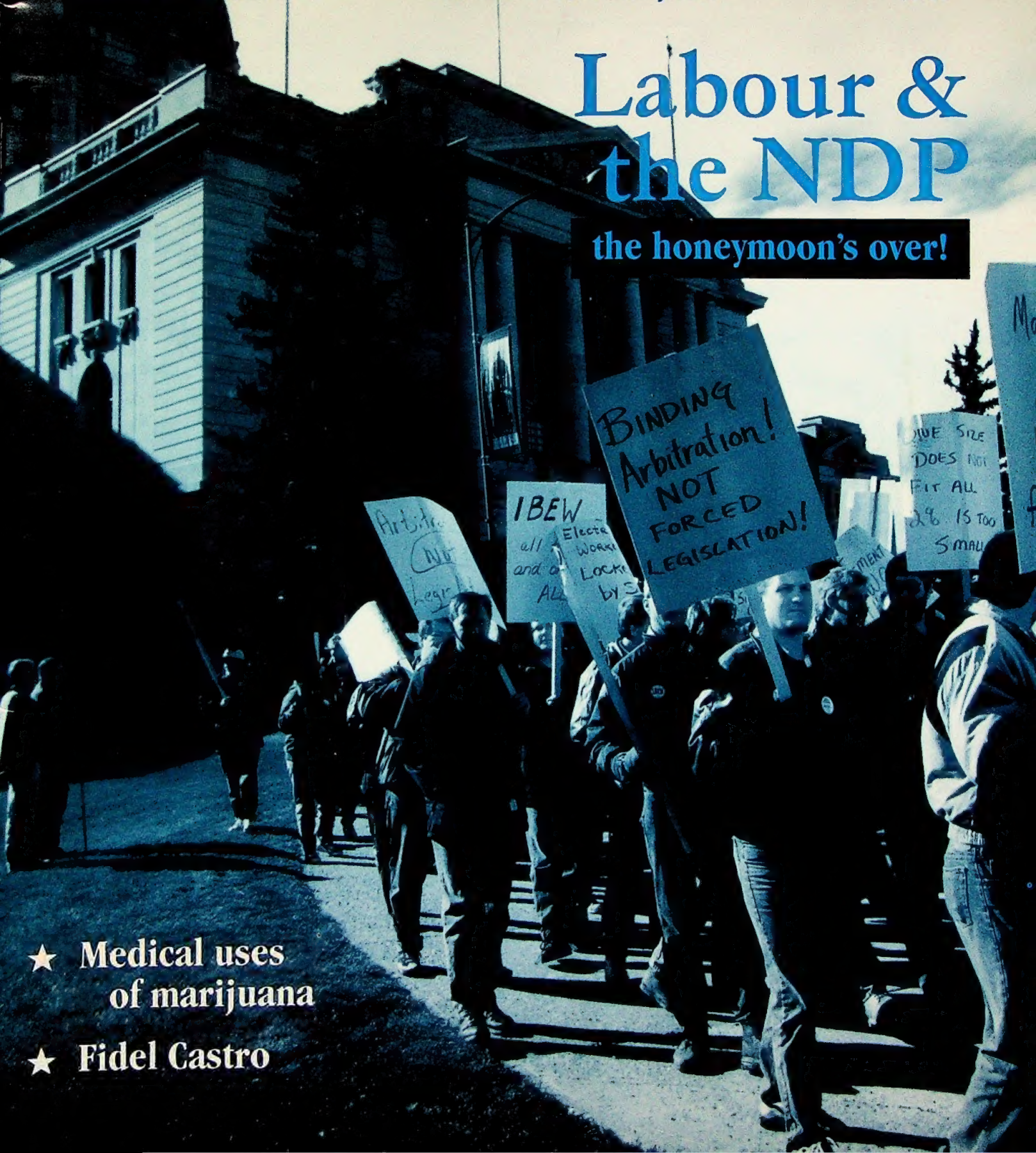
Volume 27, Number 10

December 1998 / January 1999

\$3.00

Labour & the NDP

the honeymoon's over!



- ★ Medical uses of marijuana
- ★ Fidel Castro

CAN A BANK CHANGE?

The Bank of Nova Scotia has expanded its international banking as part of its plans for the future. One of its major customers is a company in Pueblo, Colorado.



Regina trade unionists marching in support of striking CF&I Steelworkers.

That customer is CF&I, a rail producer recently bought out by Oregon Steel. The Steelworkers union has filed a complaint to the U.S. National Labor Relations Board that CF&I/Oregon Steel has violated U.S. labor laws in its treatment of 1,100 union members who were forced on strike in October 1997.

The workers offered to return to work under the terms of the old contract last December. Instead of accepting the union's offer, CF&I said no. The company prefers to operate the plant with scabs, using a US\$125 million line of credit from a consortium of banks, including the Bank of Nova Scotia.

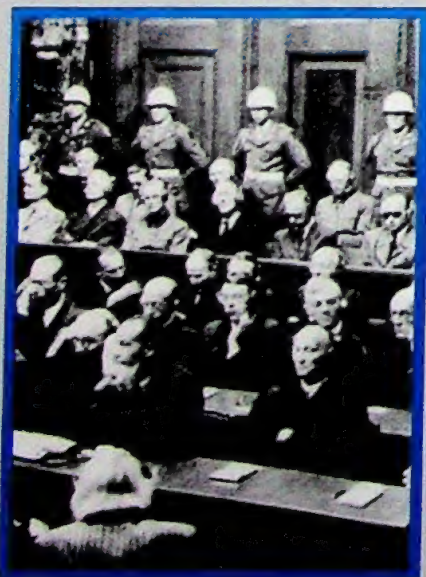
So if you do your financial business there, perhaps you should do your banking elsewhere. You should also let the bank manager know why you are changing banks.

WAR CRIMES COURT

On July 17, the dream of establishing a world court to try the most heinous war crimes became a reality, with 120 votes for and only seven against.

Approval came

1945 Nuremberg trial against Nazi war criminals.



after an American bid to secure cast iron guarantees that U.S. servicemen and agents could never be hauled before the court for crimes committed on official duty was crushed by a vote of 113-17 with 25 abstentions.

"This is a great, historical achievement," said Benjamin Ferencz, a chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals after World War II.

The court will come into existence in the Hague once 60 countries have ratified the treaty.

JUDY SCHREFFLER

On July 14, a devoted member of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada lost her year-long battle with lung cancer. Judy Schreffler was elected secretary of CEP Local 1-S in 1986. She was re-elected for six consecutive terms, to hold the position for 12 years. She went to great lengths to ensure the effective operation of the local office and to provide efficient service and help to the members of the union. At the time of her passing, Judy also held the position of secretary for the CEP Saskatchewan Area Council and was an active member of the CEP Saskatchewan Council. Judy's political views were unique in her family and she was an inspiration to her nephew and *Briarpatch* contributor Darren Ell. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.



WARM SOMEONE'S HEART

Share *Briarpatch* with all your friends and relatives. It's the perfect holiday gift. Take care of your holiday shopping *now* and save up to 50 percent off the cover price. The first Holiday Gift Subscription is only \$20. After that they are only \$15 each.

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Just send us the names, addresses and postal codes of those receiving the gift, along with your cheque, money order, VISA or MasterCard Number and expiry date. Or you can photocopy the back cover of the November issue. This offer expires December 31, 1998.

Briarpatch is Saskatchewan's independent alternative newsmagazine committed to building a socialist democratic society. We provide an open forum for disadvantaged peoples and support progressive movements working to change unjust structures and build a genuine political and economic democracy. We support peace, equality, democracy, social justice, Aboriginal self-determination, and the protection of the environment. We oppose the oppression of people on the basis of nation, class, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation.

BRIARPATCH

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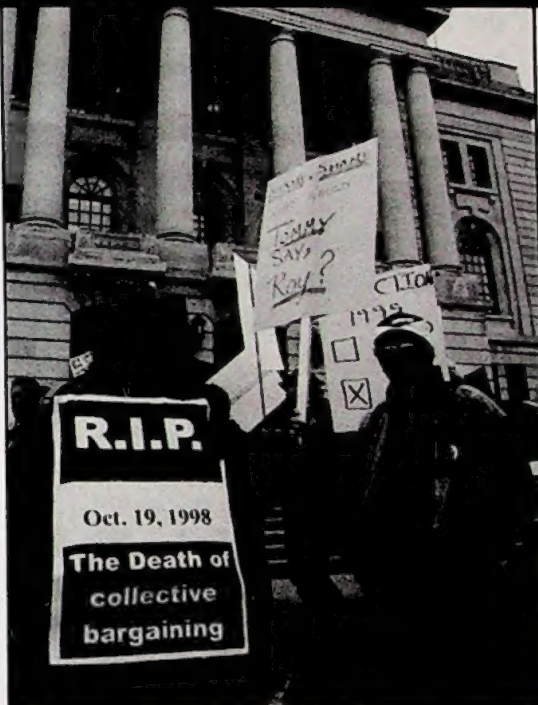
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brought in scabs, and finally fired them.

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It should have been front page news around the world. But it wasn't.

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COVER PHOTO

George Manz

Jubilee 2000

A campaign to cancel Third World debt.

by Peter Gilmer

Once every 50 years, according to the Hebrew scriptures of *The Bible*, the Israelites were supposed to cancel debt, free slaves and redistribute wealth and land. The Jubilee year was a corrective measure aimed at the economic tendency of groups and individuals to accumulate wealth at the expense of the majority, a time when all inequalities built up over the years were crossed off and everyone would begin again at the same point.

Using the Jubilee as its vision for a new beginning, religious organizations around the world are calling for debt cancellation as the most important moral imperative of our time. The Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative is part of a global effort to convince the leaders of the lending countries that they must cancel the debts of the world's poorest and most indebted nations. Jubilee 2000 petitions are being circulated around the world so that millions of individuals can call for freedom of debt slavery so that impoverished countries can have a fresh start as they begin the new millennium. These petitions will be presented to the leaders of the lending nations on the occasion of the 1999 G-8 Summit in Germany.

Billions of people around the world are enslaved by debts which continue to grow and which can never be repaid. For every \$1 that lending countries provide in aid, over \$3 comes back in debt servicing. Furthermore, lending practices have called for austerity measures and structural adjustment programs as a condition for



photo: Dominique Morissette

poor countries receiving new loans. This means that countries have to sacrifice the health and education of their children and other basic necessities of life for their people in order to pay their debts. Mozambique spends more on debt repayment than it does on health and education combined.

The Jubilee 2000 Initiative calls for the cancellation of debts for about 45 countries known as the Highly Indebted Poor Countries. Debt remission is the first step in a much broader Jubilee 2000 campaign to fundamentally re-order our global economic system to serve peoples' needs.

Peter Gilmer is an economic justice advocate for the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry. For more information contact The Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, PO BOX 772, Toronto ON M4Y 2N6; phone (416) 922-1592; fax (416) 922-0957; E-mail jubilee@devp.org

What Poverty Means to Children



Getting a basket from the Santa Fund
 Feeling ashamed when my dad can't get a job
 Not buying books at the book fair
 Not getting to go to birthday parties
 Hearing my mom and dad fight over money
 Not ever getting a pet because it costs too much
 Wishing you had a nice house
 Not being able to go camping
 Not getting a hot dog on hot dog day
 Not being able to have your friends sleep over
 Pretending that you forgot your lunch
 Being afraid to tell your mom that you need gym shoes
 Not having breakfast sometimes
 Not being able to play hockey

Sometimes really hard because my mom gets scared and she cries
 Not being able to go to Cubs or play soccer
 Not being able to take swimming lessons
 Not being able to afford a holiday
 Not having pretty barrettes for your hair
 Not having your own private backyard
 Being teased for the way you are dressed
 Not getting to go on school trips

Responses from grade four and five students.
 (Neighbour to Neighbour: Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition.)

LETTERS

Dear Briarpatch,

In the September issue of *Briarpatch* Erin Weir argues that no cuts have been made to health care during the Romanow government. He points out that the provincial budget

for health went from \$1.59 billion in 1991, the last year of the Tory government of Grant Devine, to \$1.72 billion in 1998. The chart shows the budget figures for health.

As can be seen, in nominal terms (current dollars), the budget was below that of 1991 until 1997. Health care as a percentage of the total budget has yet to reach the level of the last year of the Devine government. But when the budget is adjusted for inflation, the 1998 budget is still considerably below that of 1991. In 1998 dollars, the 1991 budget was \$1.874 billion.

Most of the health care budget goes to pay the wages and salaries of

health care workers, nurses, and doctors. Because of collective agreements, the budget must go up about three per cent per year. If it doesn't, then jobs and services are cut.

As Weir points out, during this period the federal government cut health transfer payments substantially. But if the Romanow government had raised royalties on natural resources up to the levels they were during the NDP government of Allan Blakeney, as they promised to do, they could have covered the loss of federal funds and not cut services.

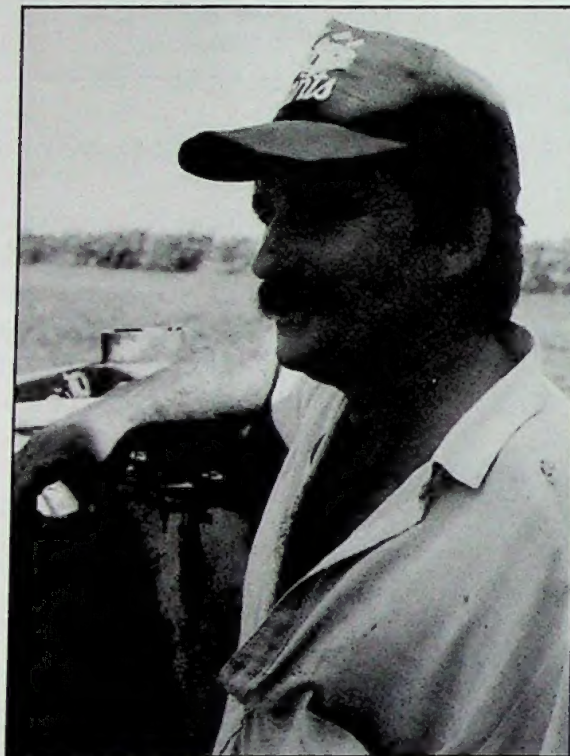
John W. Warnock
 New Green Alliance
 Regina, SK

Year	Health Budget	%Total Budget
1991	\$1,598	33.2
1992	1,541	30.8
1993	1,496	30.4
1994	1,510	30.0
1995	1,561	31.3
1996	1,560	31.3
1997	1,633	32.3
1998	1,720	32.9

Co-op Farmers Rethink Food Production

Oxfam Canada is helping to increase food production in Cuba through innovative sustainable techniques.

by Mark Fried



Orestes Calvo Fariña on the land that Jesse Helms would take away.
photo: Oxfam Canada

Cuba's land is fertile and its farmers have access to land and credit, but they are vulnerable to the harsh climate of international politics. The collapse of Cuba's trading partners in 1990 brought agricultural production to a standstill and for the first time in a generation, Cubans were hungry. No longer able to import hybrid seeds or chemical fertilizers, and without fuel for their tractors, Cuban farmers had to rethink everything.

Since then, the 210,000 cooperative farmers of the National Association of Small Producers (ANAP) have led the way toward food self-sufficiency through innovative experiments in sustainable agriculture. With support from Oxfam Canada, ANAP has promoted biological pesticides, hydraulic ram irrigation pumps, and other sustainable techniques for growing food in Ciego de Avila province. In 1997 and 1998, Oxfam helped ANAP build a greenhouse capable of producing a million disease-resistant tomato seedlings a month. Not only is the cooperative greenhouse the first of its kind in Cuba, it is managed and operated entirely by women.

Jesús Trujillo, president of ANAP in Ciego de Avila, says "Farmers hear with their eyes. It doesn't matter how many times you tell people that biological pesticides work. They become convinced by seeing it."

With proceeds from the Cuba Shares Campaign, Oxfam will assist ANAP's ambitious program to increase food production and provide specialized training for women farmers. The expected result: increased security and status for women in farming communities, and more fresh food on the table in homes throughout Cuba.

The ANAP cooperatives who will benefit from the Cuba Shares Campaign are in the line of fire of the Helms-Burton Law, which penalizes Canadians who invest in

such properties, because their lands would be returned to their former owners.

On Antonio Maceo Cooperative in La Florencia, over half the 82 members received land expropriated from the Rodriguez family, who are now U.S. citizens. When co-op president Miguelin Sosa was a child, his parents were sharecroppers who had to turn over two-thirds of their harvest to the Rodriguez family. Miguelin's parents were functionally illiterate, and lived in a thatched hut without electricity or running water. Older cooperative members recall a time when the landlord forced them out into the bush.

Miguelin now owns seven acres on which he grows vegetables and tobacco and grazes dairy cows. He holds a degree in agriculture and his wife Sonia has three degrees: in computer science, foreign language teaching and agri-

culture. Their brick house has running water, electricity, a refrigerator and a television. There is a school and a clinic with a full-time doctor nearby. Cuba's land reform transformed their lives.

At Segundo Congreso Cooperative in Majagua, all 23 members (eight of whom are women) were sharecroppers who received their land as a result of the agrarian reform. After receiving title, they continued working the land as individual family plots until 1980, when 18 of them pooled resources to found the cooperative. The most visible improvements in their lives are the solid brick homes with electricity and running water, although they have no sewers, and growing families need new housing.

Co-op founder Feliciano Fuentes, now nearly 80, fondly recalls the bountiful pineapple harvests of the mid-1980s. They began growing pineapples at the suggestion of Cuba's Agriculture Ministry but only after two years of haggling. He says the government refused to offer a fair price, so the co-op held out until they were satisfied. With the onset of the economic crisis in 1990, however, this cash crop had to be abandoned. Gasoline to run the irrigation pump was unavailable.

Today Segundo Congreso produces yucca, beans, corn

and papaya on a small part of their 2,500 acres, the rest of which lies fallow due to lack of irrigation. Co-op president Orestes Calvo says with the proceeds from the Cuba Shares Campaign they'll buy an electric pump and other inputs to grow more food for local consumption. They'd also like to rekindle pineapple production using organic techniques. The fruit will be processed at a nearby plant, and Oxfam Belgium plans to sell it as fair-trade pineapple juice in Europe.

Cooperative farmers are in the forefront of Cuba's efforts to move from conventional "modern" agriculture - based on heavy machinery, hybrid seeds and imports - to a more sustainable food system. But by scaring off financing from abroad and threatening to take away their land, Helms-Burton undercuts their hard work. The Cuba Shares Campaign is a small but effective way to bring their dream of greater food security to fruition.

Mark Fried works for Oxfam Canada in the Democratic Rights of the Americas program. If you wish to purchase shares in the campaign, please make your cheque payable to Oxfam Canada, Room 325-424 Wellington St., London ON N6A 3P3.

CUBA

A Share in Justice



"We value the support of our Canadian friends in the struggle to overcome the hardship wrought by the U.S. blockade."
Pedro Pablo Pintado, secretary of the Segundo Congreso Cooperative

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

IS THE HOLDER OF A SHARE IN JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE OF CUBA

ANAP
Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños

SERIAL # 0 2140

- Proceeds from the sale of this share will be invested in cooperative food production in Ciego de Avila, Cuba, through partnership between Oxfam-Canada and Cuba's Small Farmers Association (ANAP).
- Farmers on these coops were given their land after the Cuban Revolution. The U.S. Helms-Burton law would take this land away and give it to wealthy Americans who claim to own it.
- By purchasing this symbolic share, the holder is voluntarily supporting the repeal of the Helms-Burton law and an end to the U.S. blockade.

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canada

1 SHARE
= \$1.00

• 65-m

Tax receipts issued for donations of \$10.00 or more.

Hunger, Poverty, Health & Revolution

*Despite the many problems of the world,
Fidel Castro remains an optimist.*

by Fidel Castro



The World Health Organization, together with UNICEF, has helped to save the lives of hundreds of millions of children and millions of mothers, which has relieved the suffering and saved the lives of many more millions of human beings.

These two institutions have made a decisive contribution to the establishment of a universal awareness of the serious problems of the world today and the great challenges which we have before us.

According to the calculations of renowned economists, the world economy grew six-fold and the produc-

tion of wealth and services grew from less than \$5 trillion to more than \$29 trillion between 1950 and 1997.

Why, then, is it still the case that 12 million children under five years of age die each year - 33,000 per day - of whom the overwhelming majority could be saved?

Nowhere in the world, in no act of genocide, in no war, are so many people killed per minute, per hour and per day as those who are killed by hunger and poverty on our planet.

The children who die and could be saved are almost 100 percent poor, and of those who survive, we must ask why 500,000 are left blind every year for lack of a simple vitamin which costs less than a pack of cigarettes per year?

Why are 200 million children under five years of age undernourished?

Why are there 250 million children and adolescents working?

Why do 110 million not attend primary school and 275 million fail to attend secondary school?

Why do two million girls become prostitutes each year? Why in this world - which already produces almost \$30 trillion worth of goods and services per year - do 1.3 billion human beings live in absolute poverty, receiving less than a dollar a day - when there are those who receive more than a million dollars a day?

Why do 800 million lack the most basic health services?

Why is it that, of the 50 million people who die each year in the world, whether adults or children, 17 million - that is approximately 50,000 per day - die of infectious diseases which could almost all be cured - or, even better, be prevented - at a cost which is sometimes no more than one dollar per person?

How much is a human life worth? What is the cost to humanity of the unjust and intolerable order which pre-

vails in the world?

Why did 585,000 women die during pregnancy or in childbirth in 1996, 99 percent of them in the Third World, 70,000 due to abortions carried out in poor conditions, 69,000 of them in Latin America, Africa and Asia?

Apart from the huge differences in the quality of life between rich and poor countries, people in rich countries live an average of 12 years longer than people in poor countries. And even within some nations, the difference in life expectancy between the richest and poorest is between 20 and 35 years.

It is really sad to think that, just in the area of maternal and post-natal services, in spite of the efforts of the WHO and UNICEF over the last 50 years, the number of deaths from lack of medical services has been 600 million children and 25 million mothers who could have survived. But that would have required a more rational and more just world.

In that same post-war period, \$30 trillion in military expenditures were spent. According to UN estimates, the cost of providing universal access to basic health care services would be \$25 billion per year - just three percent of the \$800 billion which is currently devoted to military expenditure - and this after the end of the Cold War.

There is no let-up in arms sales, which have the sole purpose of killing, while the medicines which should be provided to save lives become increasingly expensive. The market in medicines in 1995 reached \$280 billion. The developed countries, with 14.6 percent of the world's population - 824 million inhabitants - consume 82 percent of these medicines. The rest of the world - 4.815 billion people - consume only 18 percent.

Prices of medicines are prohibitive for the Third World, where only the privileged sectors can afford them. The control of patents and markets by the large transnational companies enables them to raise those prices as much as ten times above their production costs. Some of the latest antibiotics are priced at 50 times their production cost.

Old illnesses have returned and new ones are appearing: AIDS, the Ebola virus, anthrax, BSE or mad cow disease - more than 30, according to the specialists. Either we defeat AIDS or AIDS will destroy many Third World countries. No poor person can pay the \$10,000 per person each year that current treatments cost - which merely prolong life without actually curing the disease.

The climate is changing. The seas and the atmosphere are heating up. The air and water are becoming contaminated. Soil is eroding, deserts are growing, forests are disappearing, and water is becoming scarce.

Who can save our species? The blind, uncontrollable law of the market? Neo-liberal globalization, alone and for its own sake, like a cancer which devours human be-

ings and destroys nature? That cannot be the way forward, or at least it can only last for a brief period in history. The WHO is fighting heroically against these realities, and it also has the duty of being optimistic.

As a Cuban and a revolutionary, I share their optimism. With a current infant mortality rate of 7.2 per thousand live births during the first year, a doctor for every 176 inhabitants - which is the highest level in the world - and a life expectancy of more than 75 years of age, Cuba has fulfilled the WHO Health for All program for the year 2000 since 1983 - despite the cruel blockade it has suffered for almost 40 years, despite being a poor Third World country.

The attempt to commit genocide against our country has only made us redouble our efforts and increased our will to survive.

The world can also fight and win.

Fidel Castro is the president of Cuba. This is an edited version of his speech in Geneva where he was presented with the "Health for All Medal" by the UN's World Health Organization. He received a standing ovation for his country's achievement in reaching and surpassing all of the WHO's health standards.



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DROP IN SOON!

The Determinants of Health

The promise of a truly healthy population is buried in the relationship between social inequality and health.

by Larry LeMoal

When Steven Lewis finished his health care funding presentation to the audience drawn by the Council of Canadians to Regina's Museum of Natural History on September 21, I complained that "he seemed to be telling us that we could quit worrying about cutbacks to health services and all go home and go to bed." Lewis, chief executive officer of the Health Services Utilization and Research Commission (HSURC), had just asserted that health spending had never been higher, and that political demands for more spending on health services that produce no improvement in people's health were misguided. He also offered the somewhat heretical view that there was little or no relationship between health care spending and health status once spending levels reach \$800 or \$1,000 per capita (Canada now stands at \$2,500). "Paying for services is not the same as paying for outcomes," he argued. He maintained that if you had a billion dollars to improve peoples' health, you should spend it on education, housing, communities, and creating good jobs, not on more health services, since health spending yields a diminishing return as spending increases. He also claimed that much of the debate about health reform was "fear-mongering" by health providers who foster anxiety in the public in order to pressure governments to pour more money into the



Steven Lewis
photo: Larry LeMoal

sector that pays their salaries.

My health policy work with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses had already exposed me to these views. But, I was bothered by the fact that HSURC's research and this concept of "determinants of health" has been quoted by every Minister of Health in Saskatchewan since 1992 to justify cuts to institutional health services - to shrink the health delivery system, instead of reforming it. Indeed, HSURC's studies on utilization revealed that many patients in hospital beds shouldn't be, and that many were admitted to nursing homes prematurely. (Placing the elderly in nursing homes before continuous care is required actually contributes to their rapid decline, as opposed to providing that elderly person with required health services in their own home).

Saskatchewan health ministers love evidence that shows we don't need as many hospital beds, because that suits a cost-cutting agenda. However, the government ignores research that points to the need for genuine reform of the primary care (first contact) system. The widespread prescription of antibiotics for people with colds and other viruses is the most commonly known example of futile, expensive, and even harmful procedures. Unjustified use of ultrasound during routine, low-risk pregnancy and prescription of cholesterol-lowering drugs for those over 75

are two more such examples researched by HSURC.

Citizens who resist health cutbacks end up defending the present, flawed system, which as a sickness care system, serves the majority of the population very well; what

Healthy communities enable healthy citizens.

it doesn't do is advance population health status very much. Defending the five principles of medicare and the present health care system isn't good enough. The public struggle between those supporting medicare, and those supporting cutbacks or a two-tier system is really only the tip of the health care "iceberg." Here's a summary of what Lewis and senior health policy planners believe about health care systems:

- * Health care systems constantly demand more resources because consumers, health providers, and drug companies create powerful political forces in favour of expansion.

- * Higher health spending doesn't necessarily lead to higher health status. The U.S. spends 14.2 percent of its GDP on health, Canada spends 9.2 percent, Japan spends only 7.2. Their rank in terms of health status as measured by life expectancy and infant mortality: Japan, Canada, the U.S. — exactly the reverse.

- * Universal access to health care doesn't lead to universal good health — although it is a major public policy achievement that poor people in Canada use more health services than rich people. Not only are wealthy, well-educated individuals healthier than the poor and the illiterate, it is also true that upper middle class people are on average healthier than middle class people, who are healthier than lower middle class people, etc.

- * Health care almost always wins out in the competition for resources. There's been no major shift of dollars away from treatment and towards health promotion and prevention. Governments see little political pay-off in gains for future decades, compared to responding to current demands.

- * Good health status begets better health status, exacerbating differences among classes. For example, people in higher socio-economic groups benefit more from anti-smoking campaigns than lower socio-economic groups, for whom such programs are often intended.

The toughest health policy pill to swallow is the one known as "determinants of health." This analysis tells us that people's health (individually and collectively) is not determined nearly as much by the level of health services

provided or consumed, as by social factors. Adequate nurturing and stimulation in early childhood will greatly increase the chances of producing healthy and resilient adults; conversely, a bad start in these crucial formative years casts a pall over subsequent decades. Healthy communities enable healthy citizens. In the absence of genetic mishap or serious injury, your income and social status are the strongest predictors of your health and life expectancy. Wealth equals health. Finally, the greatest life expectancy gains have occurred in countries where the gap between rich and poor is narrowest, not in countries that are wealthiest.

So, what does all this mean? We should defend medicare against privatization and the threat of a two-tier system. We should insist that quality health care services be there for those who are ill. But, if the goal is better health, we also have to demand broader social reform, not just resist health cutbacks. Primary care reform shows the most promise for improving health services, particularly for the poor and working class. But the promise of a truly healthy population is buried in the relationship between social inequality and health, and inequality is increasing. The architects of health reform have done their homework and understand that genuine health reform actually requires social change. It's time the rest of us did too.

Larry LeMoal works for the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses.

The MAI+ is dangerous to your health.

**It will allow for
the privatization of
our health services.**

Let's stop it - now!



**Canadian Union of
Public Employees
Saskatchewan Division**



Saskatchewan labour protests federal Liberal government's misuse of the UI surplus.

"Unemployment insurance money is supposed to be used for the unemployed," says Canadian Labour Congress President Bob White. "But, Finance Minister Martin wants to confiscate that money and use it for his own political purposes."

The CLC President was responding to the burgeoning surplus which is accumulating in the unemployment insurance account and speculation over how Finance Minister Paul Martin plans to change the law so that the federal government can access the money for other programs. The surplus fund will reach close to \$20 billion this year.

"More money is going into the surplus fund this year than what is being paid to the unemployed in regular benefits," notes White.

"The cuts to UI have been so drastic that thousands of working Canadians are sliding into poverty because Paul Martin wants to

take their insurance money and use it for purposes for which it was never intended," emphasizes White.

Two out of every three unemployed workers are not getting unemployment insurance despite the fact they have paid into the program.

"What's wrong with this picture?" says White. "What's wrong is the callous attitude of the federal government when it comes to dealing with employed and unemployed workers. People who are unemployed shouldn't be punished."



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David & Goliath

David Orchard's bid for the Tory leadership has raised both hopes and hackles.

by Terry Pugh

Ten years ago, when Borden-area farmer David Orchard was spearheading a concerted fight against the Free Trade Agreement, the idea of running for the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative (PC) Party was probably the last thing on his mind.

And for good reason. At the time, he and his organization, Citizens Concerned about Free Trade (CCAFT), were embroiled in the 1988 federal election - hoping to defeat the Tory government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Orchard criss-crossed the country on a speaking tour, urging the NDP and Liberal parties to run joint candidates on an anti-free trade platform. It was an idea that went over like a lead balloon, and the Tories squeaked back into power with a reduced majority.

But during that campaign, Orchard impressed audiences with his grasp of Canadian history and the far-reaching implications of the Free Trade Agreement. The FTA, he predicted, would lead to the integration of the Canadian and American economies and erode many of this country's revered social programs. Orchard also took aim at the Prime Minister, saying he had "betrayed" the legacy of Sir John A. MacDonald's Conservative Party by caving in to American interests.

Over the past decade, the FTA has been supplanted by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). But David Orchard didn't just retire back to the family farm he and his brothers began operating on an organic basis since 1975. He kept campaigning doggedly against what he sees as growing control over the Canadian economy by American-based multinational corporations.

So when Orchard spelled out his intention to seek the leadership of the Tory party in an irony-laced announcement at John Diefenbaker's old one-room school near



graphic: Greg Land

Borden, Saskatchewan last summer, he raised more than a few eyebrows from observers on both the right and left ends of the political spectrum. To former Conservative Cabinet Minister John Crosbie, Orchard was a "kook" intent on hijacking the party. Former Prime Minister Joe Clark dismissed him as a "tourist."

But Orchard disputes critics' claims that he's too left-wing to be a true-blue Tory. "If the word 'conserve' means anything at all, I am a Conservative," Orchard is quoted as

saying in the August 14, 1998 edition of the *Globe and Mail*. "I want to conserve our nation, I want to conserve our economy, I want to conserve our environment and I want to conserve the border between ourselves and our powerful neighbour to the south."

"In my view, I am not the outsider, but it was Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Crosbie who hijacked the Conservative Party and took it away from its 120-year history by signing a sweeping continental integration agreement and trying repeatedly to weaken the Canadian Constitution. The founders of this Party stood for a strong and independent Canada with a domestically-controlled economy and that is where I will take this party: to a Canada with employment, pride and dignity for all, not status as a satellite of the United States."

Orchard launched a "Ten Dollar Revolution" campaign to convince his supporters to join the Tories. The party's one-member, one-vote electoral process provided him with the opportunity to tap into the CCAFT network he'd built up over the past decade. And while front-running candidates Hugh Segal and Joe Clark grabbed the media headlines in the race, Orchard's supporters were quietly signing up enough supporters to upset the political establishment's applecart. When the dust cleared following the first ballot of the leadership vote October 24, Orchard had finished in third place, a hair's breadth behind long-time backroom strategist Segal. True to form, Clark had failed to gain the majority he needed to pull off a first-ballot win.

By early November, Segal and the rest of the traditionally-minded Tory leadership candidates had dropped out of the race in an effort to ensure Clark's eventual victory. But Orchard vowed to stay in the contest, and Clark's coronation seemed somewhat less than a foregone conclusion.

For many left-leaning people, Orchard's bid for the Tory leadership has provided a breath of fresh air in an otherwise arid political landscape. While a majority have so far found it difficult to actually sign on the dotted line for a PC membership card, some observers think that could change should Orchard successfully shift the party to the left.

"If Orchard wins the PC leadership, the NDP is dead federally," commented Jack Warnock of Regina in an interview in early November. "He's far to the left of the NDP, and I know a lot of long-time NDP types who are pulling for him. They're ticked off at the right-wing approach of the NDP on free trade and other issues. The NDP has accepted NAFTA as a fait accompli that cannot be changed."

Warnock said Orchard has earned considerable credibility because of his strong positions on a variety of issues. "He's not a one-issue candidate by any means," he pointed out. "If you look at his campaign platform, his policies are traditional Keynesian policies of full employment and a full range of social services."

"I don't think there's any question Clark will win on the second ballot, but I also think Orchard's good showing is because the Canadian people are really looking for a political leader with some principles, and Orchard fits that bill. I think it's a good thing for the Canadian political scene, because he's bringing forward a lot of issues that nobody else wants to face."

Orchard has reportedly spent \$250,000 on his campaign, according to the October 31, 1998 issue of the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix*, and is optimistic he can pull enough supporters in to capture the PC leadership on the second ballot on November 14.

Terry Pugh is editor of The Village Press, based in Warman, Saskatchewan.

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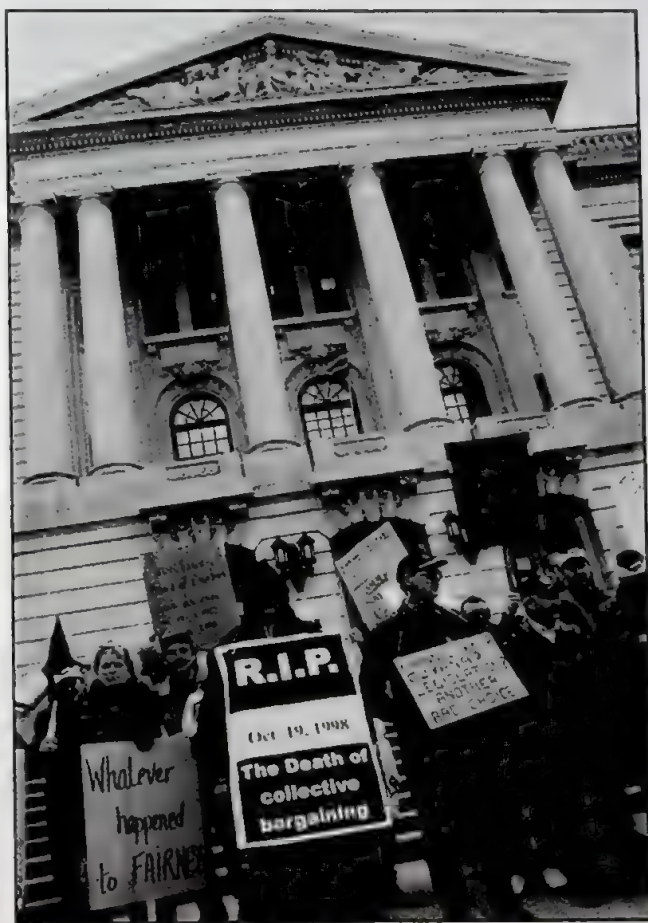


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The End of Collective Bargaining

The Saskatchewan government legislates an end to a lock-out.

by Martha Tracey
photography by George Manz



Collective bargaining in Saskatchewan is in a shambles, after the NDP government's unprecedented back-to-work order was imposed on its locked-out SaskPower (SPC) workers on October 19. For Gord Gunoff, Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), it's been a constant struggle to counter the anti-union "spins" put on the story by press and politicians alike. "It took us three weeks after we were locked out to get the press to understand we weren't on strike," he says. Of course, by then, the damage had been done.

Then there was the suggestion that IBEW is in favour of privatization of the power corporation - a distortion pounced on by the likes of Saskatchewan (read Tory) Party Leader Elwin Hermanson. Hermanson and others chose to distort comments made by Gunoff on a Saskatoon open line radio program. Gunoff's point is that SPC can't stay competitive with private power companies if it doesn't match the wages paid by private power utilities. "Privati-

zation of this corporation will not work," he states unequivocally. "It's here to serve the people of Saskatchewan."

He is frustrated by SPC and government invocation of what he terms "the deregulation bogeyman," when in the next breath they refuse to compete with wages offered by private power companies. Ruth Boyd, the only woman journeyman industrial mechanic at SPC's Poplar River Power Station in Coronach, sees the effect of SPC's lower wages constantly. Vacancies, particularly in the trades, go unfilled for long periods of time. "They end up hiring apprentices without journeyman's certificates," she says. "All the qualified people are in Alberta." She cites an IBEW survey that indicated Alberta power company employees are making \$3.50 per hour more at the top than their Saskatchewan counterparts. In private industry, the differential increases to \$5 an hour.

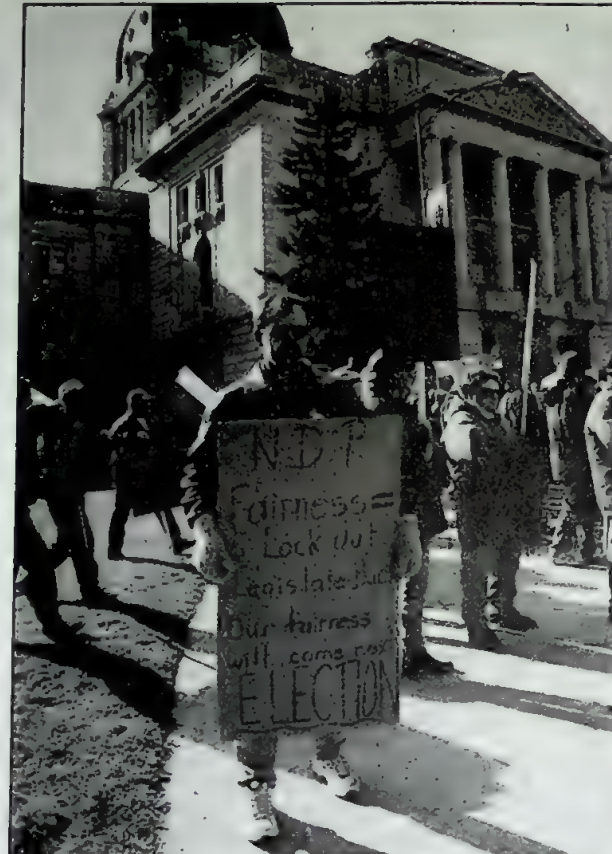
Ruth Boyd doesn't see the vacancies being filled in the near future. "At one time we had a very good appren-



ticeship program at SPC. But it hasn't been in place for five years. There are lots of people close to retirement like me. There's no apprenticeship program. Where will we get the employees?"

Boyd also disputes the suggestion that every SPC worker makes \$58,000 a year or more. "As of October 15, I had made \$32,000 this calendar year," she says. "There's no way I could have made \$58,000 by year-end. I have no idea who is making \$58,000. If they are, they're working extraordinary hours of overtime and they have no home life."

Ask Boyd about workers' reactions to being legis-



lated back to the work they got locked out of, and you get a string of adjectives. "Our guys are devastated that SPC would force them into this position. They are angry, frustrated, confused. The mood is not happy." Contrast that with her description of a "family" atmosphere between workers and managers ten years ago.

Boyd sat in the legislature gallery the day the infamous legislation was introduced. She was shocked by what she saw. "The MLAs were writing Christmas cards, reading computer magazines, chatting back and forth, smirking. It was really, really annoying. This was a precedent-setting piece of legislation. They toyed with it, trivialized it." She was particularly disgusted by MLAs who heckled at union members in the gallery. "Why did Roy Romanow at his business dinner promise the businesses and political hacks that business has never been better, and that there would be tax cuts and deficit reduction? How is that possible with what they're saying to us?"

Other Saskatchewan unions, particularly those whose members' salaries are funded directly by government or indirectly by third parties, watched the government's actions with grave concern. The government's action "makes a mockery of their alleged belief in free collective bargaining," says Stephen Foley, President of the Health Care Workers Council of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. "We have the absurd situation of SaskPower management locking out some of its employees and then the government steps in to legislate them back. Furthermore, the employer refuses to agree to binding arbitration be-



cause an arbitrator might accept the workers' case and grant them a higher wage than the government's so-called 'guidelines.' This is wage controls under a different guise and forced back-to-work legislation is not bargaining, it's bullying."

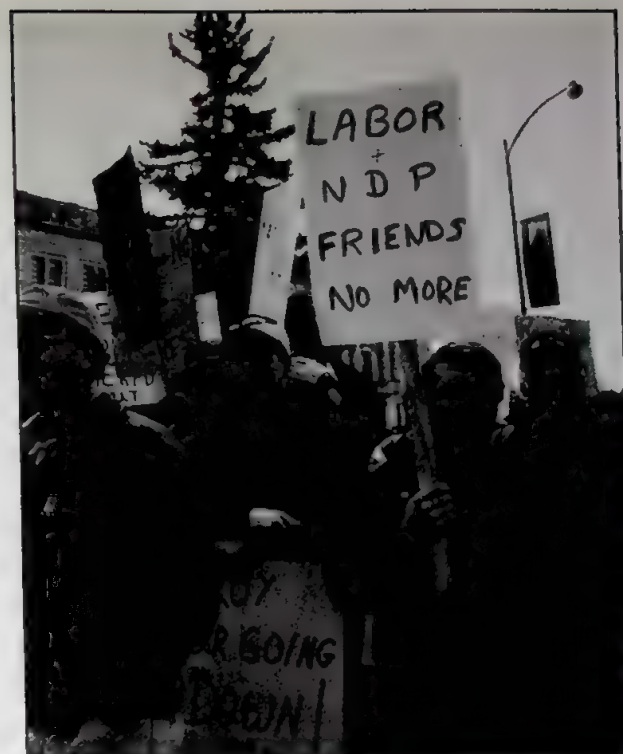
Bev Crossman, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN), states, "There's one school of thought that this legislation isn't directed at the IBEW but at almost 30,000 health sector members who are out there. Imagine the impact this is going to have on SAHO (the Saskatchewan Association of Health Care Organizations) at the bargaining table."

Not all the unions backing the IBEW are enthusiastic about their pre-lockout demand for binding arbitration. Jim Holmes of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), told the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour convention: "It's not generally the position of CUPE that we support binding arbitration. But we do support the democratic right of unions to push for that if that's what they decide."

SUN President Rosalee Longmoore concurs, "We don't support binding arbitration. But our board agreed we'd support them whatever action they wished to take when we heard about the lock-out."

Longmoore sees the government's back-to-work legislation as "a message that collective bargaining wasn't going to happen. There would be legislation if we decided to assert ourselves at the bargaining table."

Crossman is blunt about SUN's message when they go to the table, "Two, two and two isn't going to cut it." Longmoore adds, "Anything that needs to be fixed costs money."



The Canadian Union of Public Employees was in bargaining with SAHO the week that the legislation was passed. Stephen Foley says the impact of what was going on at the Legislature was clear at the table. "Out of five days of bargaining in Regina, we met with the employer for eight hours. It seemed to me there was a reluctance on the part of the other side to take bargaining seriously after the legislation passed. The next day, the employer did everything they could to keep away from the table. It's pretty tough to negotiate with the possibility of stuff like that hanging over your head," he concludes.

Martha Tracey is a Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU) member who works in Moose Jaw. She was a delegate to the recent Saskatchewan Federation of Labour convention.



The Politics of Murals

by Evangelina Sapp



Ana came to Toronto with her husband and two small children as a refugee fleeing political persecution. She knew very little English and nothing about Toronto, and didn't have anyone to turn to.

As a refugee, the only work Ana could find was as a garment worker in a coat factory.

"I will never forget the first job I got. I worked in a factory where leather coats were made. It was an old, grey building, much like a prison. Inside were many women, who barely spoke English, working from morning to night, with only a half-hour break for lunch, always crouched down over a sewing machine. We couldn't lift our heads or look to the side without the supervisor coming over and saying, 'Why are you wasting time? Keep working!'"

Ana's testimony is common to millions of garment workers around the world. Most of these jobs are occupied by women who face long hours, low wages, and unhealthy, inhumane working conditions. In Toronto, 80 to 85 percent of the women in this industry are immigrants or refugees - people easily exploited by large corporations because they have little political power to change their conditions as women and as immigrants.

As an artist with a political interest, I believe that art, not ads, should take over public spaces and promote discussion, awareness and solidarity. And muralism is one way to express these principles.

I was commissioned to paint an outdoor mural for the Mayworks Festival of Working People and the Arts in Toronto. Mayworks attempts to promote working class culture and is based on the idea that the majority of people share common struggles for better working conditions, and also share common values of global justice and peace.

I decided to make the mural depict the struggle of garment workers in Toronto, like Ana, because the exploitation they face is among the worst in the world. Most are women, particularly immigrant women of colour, who have come to this country in search of a better life.

I also came to this country as a refugee and I identify with the integrity of their struggle. The research I did for

this article has become a major part of this mural project.

The mural portrays images of exploitation. But more importantly, it shows the struggle and fight for justice and unity. I integrated testimonies and experiences of women garment workers as well as poetry. The challenge in this mural was to represent the concerns of immigrant women's struggle in the garment industry as well as to try to make as many people as possible relate to the images and words in the mural.

When I spoke to Ana for this project, she said, "Language was the most important impediment when I came to this country and I had to look for work. Immigrant women don't have many opportunities to develop intellectually, there's language problems, the family and work. I don't think many women can go to school after ten hours of work."

Many times Ana's pay cheque did not correspond with the hours she had worked and she had no means to demand her pay. Women in general are paid more than 30 percent less than their male colleagues, and immigrants and refugees usually occupy the most demanding jobs because they will not be hired by other employers, don't know the system, and like everyone else, must work to survive.

Ana spoke about how difficult it was to speak with the other workers, let alone organize.

"We were not allowed to talk about anything," she says. "At lunch hour we had to eat at the sewing machine so there was no opportunity to talk about any labour problems."

The women were also threatened and harassed by supervisors and management. When I asked Ana how she coped with these situations, she said that it was a matter of survival.

"When one has a family, if you want to or not, you have to keep going forward."

Restructuring

The garment industry has been changing over the last ten years as a result of the restructuring of the retail industry in Canada and as corporations attempt to "compete in the global market." This has been encouraged by trade deals such as NAFTA. What it means is that large corporations, which increasingly control a larger and larger part of the market, can



ask for any price from the factories. In Toronto, this has caused the loss of jobs and the inhumane treatment of workers.

In the city, five out of ten garment workers have lost their jobs to homeworkers - garment workers who no longer work in factories - who have no job security, who are paid well below minimum wage and who work under sweatshop conditions. They are sub-contracted by jobbers who are contracted by large retailers. Because of the indirect chain of command, jobbers avoid their responsibility to ensure safe and decent working conditions. And many of these women are skilled workers who are legally entitled to ten percent above minimum wage.

According to the Maquila Solidarity Network, an advocacy group for women in the garment industry world-wide, employees are paid according to their immigration status. Landed immigrants in Toronto get \$4 an hour, refugee claimants with employment authorization get \$3 an hour, and those without status get \$2. Often the women don't know how much they will be paid until they get their pay cheque. According to Label Behind the Label, another advocacy group, at peak times, women can work up to 75 hours a week. These conditions are violations of human rights because no one can survive in Toronto with such low wages.

In a Maquila Solidarity Network report, it noted that Canadian retailers such as The Bay, Tip Top Tailors, and Club Monaco have all slashed production costs by sub-contracting out and promoting these slave-like conditions for immigrant women in Toronto.

It also reported that U.S. multinational Woolworth, which owns Footlocker, Northern Reflections and other major chains, pays immigrant women in Toronto \$4.50 an hour - well below the legal minimum wage, and some have been paid as low as \$2.50 an hour. These women are pressured to work 12-hour-days and on weekends, with no overtime, no holidays, no vacation pay, no employment insurance or pension plan contributions. Meanwhile, Woolworth has total sales of \$8.1 billion, with an operating profit of \$411 million.

And for Ana the future looks bleak. "I don't think things can change much with the government we have now."

There is a tremendous movement among garment workers to organize and lobby companies to adopt acceptable working conditions. UNITE, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, which represents 30,000 workers across Canada as well as 350,000 workers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, is investigating which companies are the worst abusers, trying to make them comply with the law. In response to the reappearance of sweatshops and the attack on unions, UNITE is aggressively organizing and continuing to reach out and fight for workers' rights: dignity, respect, decent wages, benefits to support their families, and safe and healthy working conditions.

People are in tough times as a result of multinational business interests. But this corporate system depends on us, the worker and the consumer. We do not depend on them. It is our responsibility to let them know that we will not accept human rights abuses anywhere in the world. Corporations must feel they are being watched. If they aren't able to exploit people, they will self-destruct because they are based on exploitation. We must remember *they* are the minority; they depend on us and the world does not need them to survive. In order for us to stop this extreme exploitation and effect change, we first have to imagine a better society, and believe change is possible.

Art on the streets is important for revolutionary change in the world. Art can be the creation of a culture of resistance, the symbols and values of peace, justice and solidarity that we live by. But in order to have the greatest amount of impact, poetry, painting, music and theatre must be accessible to everyone, not only to view, but to participate in its creation.

Ana told me she was glad to learn about the mural. She feels political art could have an impact. She thinks it is important for employers to see how they are exploiting workers. This was the purpose of my mural.

Evangelina Sapp is painting murals in Cuba.

Who Cares About Socks?

You should!

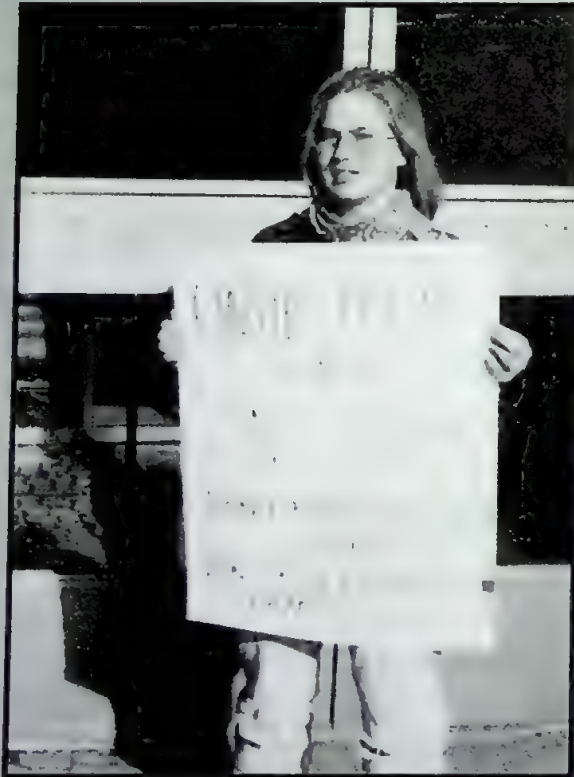
The women of UNITE Local 1764 in Trenton, Ontario have been on strike against their employer, sock maker JB Fields, since March 23, 1998. They are on strike for basic rights and equal treatment in the workplace.

The company has cut the wages of its women workers from \$12 per hour to \$7.07 per hour. While the company claims this is only a minimum and that wages can go up to \$10.45 an hour if certain onerous production targets are met, these targets are impossible to meet and dangerous to attempt. Realistically, all women at the plant would end up making the \$7.07 per hour minimum.

Meanwhile, 12 men working at the plant have had their wages cut from \$14.45 per hour to \$13 per hour without a quota requirement. (The men and several women have been crossing the picket line.)

Arbitration rulings against the company have been ignored. The Local president was fired unjustly three times. The workers face abuse and harassment at the hands of their employer.

To make matters worse, the women who remain on the picket line have now been told that, under new anti-union legislation in Ontario, their employment with JB Fields has been terminated as a result of their six-month strike action. The workers have been permanently replaced with scab labour.



This is a struggle for basic human and union rights. Your help is needed if these women are to have a chance of winning.

Here are things you can do to help:

- * Go to the picket line. The women of UNITE Local 1764 welcome *all* union and community supporters to join them on the picket line and to organize solidarity information picket lines across the country. JB Fields' largest customer is Eaton's and a concerted effort is being made to pressure Eaton's not to stock JB Fields products. In Regina, CUPE Local 2419 stages a daily half-hour information picket at Eaton's (2150-11th Avenue) at noon every day. For more information, or to obtain information to start a local solidarity picket, call (306) 585-1333.

- * Give money. Ask your union or local to support the sisters of UNITE Local 1764. Cheques should be made out to "Friends of UNITE 1764", c/o Bayshore Credit Union, 266 Dundas St. East, Unit #101, Trenton Town Centre, Trenton ON K8V 5Z9. This money will directly support the women in Trenton.

- * Write to JB Fields and companies that stock JB Fields products. Check out the Friends of UNITE Local 1764 web page at www.angelfire.com/on/unite1764 for an up to date list of companies and addresses.

The Dope on Pot

The medical uses of marijuana.

by Hilary Black

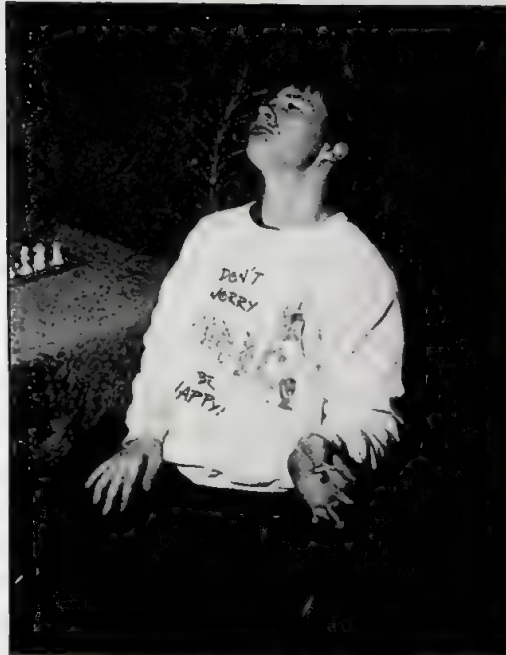
Vicky Nicholson is a 37-year-old woman living with a plethora of medical conditions. She has been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, degenerative disc disorder, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, cerebral palsy and a rare joint disorder. Vicky uses a wheelchair and deals with debilitating pain, tremors, and many other symptoms. Vicky began using cannabis 20 years ago. At that time she was on seven different pharmaceuticals, including an antidepressant.

When Vicky began using cannabis, she quickly found that it was great for pain control, it eased her tremors and lifted her spirits. The "munchies" quickly kicked in and she found herself eating large healthy meals. She has been racing her wheelchair in marathons for ten years. Today, Vicky races regularly and is one of the top five female racers in Canada. She attributes her success to her use of cannabis, as it allows her to take control of her body, and use it without so many restrictions.

After disappearing from Western medicine for over 50 years, marijuana has now become almost universally accepted by the medical community as an important aspect in treating many serious ailments such as HIV/AIDS, nausea from cancer chemotherapy, multiple sclerosis, glaucoma, epilepsy, and fibromyalgia.

Those suffering from multiple sclerosis find that cannabis reduces tremors and eases pain. Many people with MS find cannabis actually slows the onslaught of the disease. We have seen people able to begin walking again with the help of cannabis.

Cancer and HIV/AIDS patients both suffer severe nausea from the medications they take. Both also suffer from a severe loss of appetite. Cannabis is an amazing anti-nausea and appetite stimulant. Lester Grinspoon, a Harvard medical professor, spoke of his son's experience with radiation and leukemia. The vomiting and retching would



last for days. The scent or sight of food would send him into a bout of stomach convulsions. His mother had heard marijuana would help with the vomiting. He, on the other hand, did not want to break the law. So his mother and his son had a smoke in the parking lot before a treatment. Afterwards, instead of coming home to bed, his son asked if he could go have a submarine sandwich. Dr. Grinspoon was amazed. He is now a board member of the BC Compassion Club Society.

Cannabis's reputation as an appetite stimulant isn't news, but if a patient does not want to smoke to deliver the medication, there are other methods of self-dosage that are just as effective. Cannabis can be both smoked and eaten. When smoked, the medicinal properties, Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and other cannabinoids, are absorbed through the mucus membrane and into the blood stream, taking effect immediately. When eaten, the medicinal properties are filtered through the liver before reaching the blood stream. It takes one to two hours for the effects to be noticeable, and provides up to six to eight hours of relief. This makes it more difficult to control than if it is smoked. If eaten, the effects are very physical, acting as a muscle relaxant.

However, if cannabis is not available to patients in need, or if their doctor is not in favour of them using marijuana, the treatment chosen by mainstream doctors is through the use of pharmaceuticals. The pharmaceutical industry recognizes the medicinal abilities of cannabis. As a result they isolated the THC compound, synthesized it and marketed it as Marinol or Cescemet. However, there are two serious problems: 1. Eating isolated, synthetic THC has a dramatic effect on patients. Some members report that Marinol or Cescemet incapacitates them for up to 24 hours. 2. Others find Marinol or Cescemet completely ineffective. It is much easier to self-regulate one's dosage

while smoking, rather than digesting it orally. Eating cannabis that contains all of the cannabinoids has a more subtle effect than consuming isolated, synthetic THC. Some patients prescribed Marinol or Cescemet actually open their capsules and smoke the contents, in search of a more effective delivery system. Considering that the carrier oil being burned is sesame, this constitutes a serious problem.

Often members of the Compassion Club tell us that their doctor has unofficially advised them to go home and smoke a joint, rather than prescribing other pharmaceutical drugs.

If the patient's doctor is in favour of using cannabis, the patient needs to be able to have the prescription filled. But most patients find it rather problematic getting the medicine from bars, streets and remote connections.

The founders of the BC Compassion Club Society recognized the need for a reliable source of clean cannabis, free of pesticides and fungicides, in a safe, healing environment. In 1997, the BC Compassion Club Society began to provide Vancouver's chronically ill with an alternative to underground dealers. As one of the most diverse buyer's clubs, doctors, patients and the public welcome it as an essential service.

We are a not-for-profit society run collectively. Six out of our ten staff members are natural therapists. Through donations, we provide yoga, herbal therapy, holistic nutrition, aromatherapy, Reiki, and counselling. People suffering with serious illnesses tend to live well below the pov-

erty line and do not have the economic power to make the healthcare choices beyond that of pharmaceuticals. Lately, the BCCCS has improved the opportunity for members to explore other therapeutic options.

Knock on wood, the boys in blue haven't come rapping at our doors.

We believe their "lack of concern" with our club is due to the fact that we have kept medical records on our membership. Over three-quarters of the current membership have a recommendation from their doctor, proving that the medicinal need is great. A court case (knock again) would give us an opportunity to create a positive precedent for the political environment to ensure the future creation of other like-minded clubs. There are a few clubs in Ontario. Toronto and London, in particular, have groups that provide the ill with medicinal cannabis, potentially encouraging other groups across Canada to do the same. The only way to change the laws that imprisons the use of medicinal cannabis is by challenging it through distribution clubs.

Cannabis is illegal as a medicine because it threatens the pharmaceutical industry, since it can replace many profitable medicines. The financially motivated pharmaceutical industry will continue its pressure on the Canadian government to keep cannabis illegal.

So plant a seed, let's overgrow the government.

Hilary Black is the founder of the BC Compassion Club Society. For more information phone (604) 875-0448.

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Contras, Drugs & the CIA

It should have been front page news around the world.

by George Manz

It's official! On October 10, 1998 *The New York Times* finally reported on page five that CIA Inspector General Fred Hitz admitted the CIA had indeed covered up its role in smuggling drugs to support the Contras in Nicaragua in the 1980s.

But it took *Times* reporter and CIA apologist James Risen 14 paragraphs to note: "In September 1981, as a small group of rebels was being formed from former soldiers in the National Guard of the deposed Nicaraguan dictator, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, a CIA informant reported that the leadership of the fledgling group had decided to smuggle drugs to the United States to support its operation."

But for more than a decade the CIA and its apologists in the mainstream media have been pooh-poohing the notion that its agents knew about and supported the drug-dealing operation.

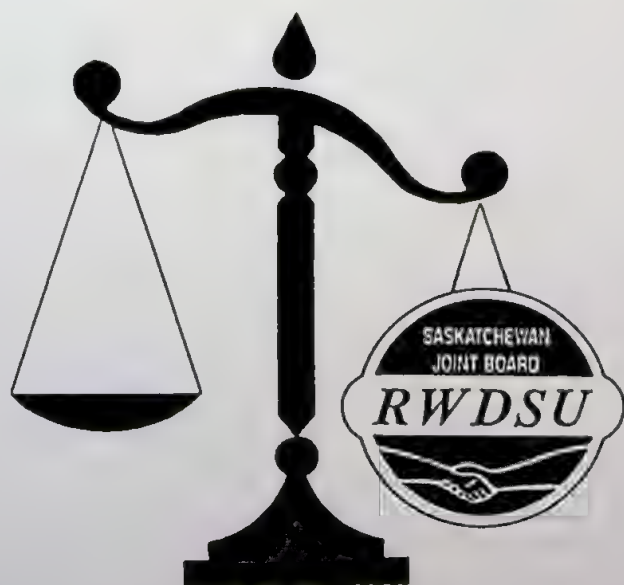
In the October 1-15, 1998 issue of *CounterPunch*, Ken Silverstein and Alexander Cockburn write: "In that single paragraph just quoted we have four momentous confessions by the CIA's own Inspector General. One: the Contras were involved in drug running from the very start. Two: the CIA knew the Contras were smuggling drugs into the U.S. in order to raise money. Three: this was a decision

not made by profiteers on the fringe of the Contras, but by the leadership. Four: the CIA, even before it got a waiver from the Justice Department, was concealing its knowledge from Congress and from other U.S. government agencies such as the DEA and the FBI. Remember also that the Contra leadership was hand-picked by the CIA, both in the form of its civilian head, Adolfo Calero, and of its military director, Enrique Bermudez."

The decision to bury the Contra drug connection did not come from some "CIA rogue agent," but went right inside the White House itself. According to *CounterPunch*, in May 1998, Hitz disclosed that in 1982, President Reagan's CIA director "William Casey had gotten a waiver from Reagan's attorney general, William French Smith, allowing the CIA to keep secret from other government agencies its knowledge of drug trafficking by its assets, contractors and other Contra figures."

In fact, the New York City and International editions of the *Times* didn't even carry the 14th paragraph. That's because an editor chopped the story to make room for an ad. Luckily, the ad didn't appear in the Washington, D.C. edition. That's where Silverstein and Cockburn read it.

George Manz is the editor of Briarpatch.



EVERY WORKING WOMAN AND MAN

needs someone in their corner. That is the role of unions. Unions represent workers' interests, make sure their voices are heard, and ensure fair treatment for their members.

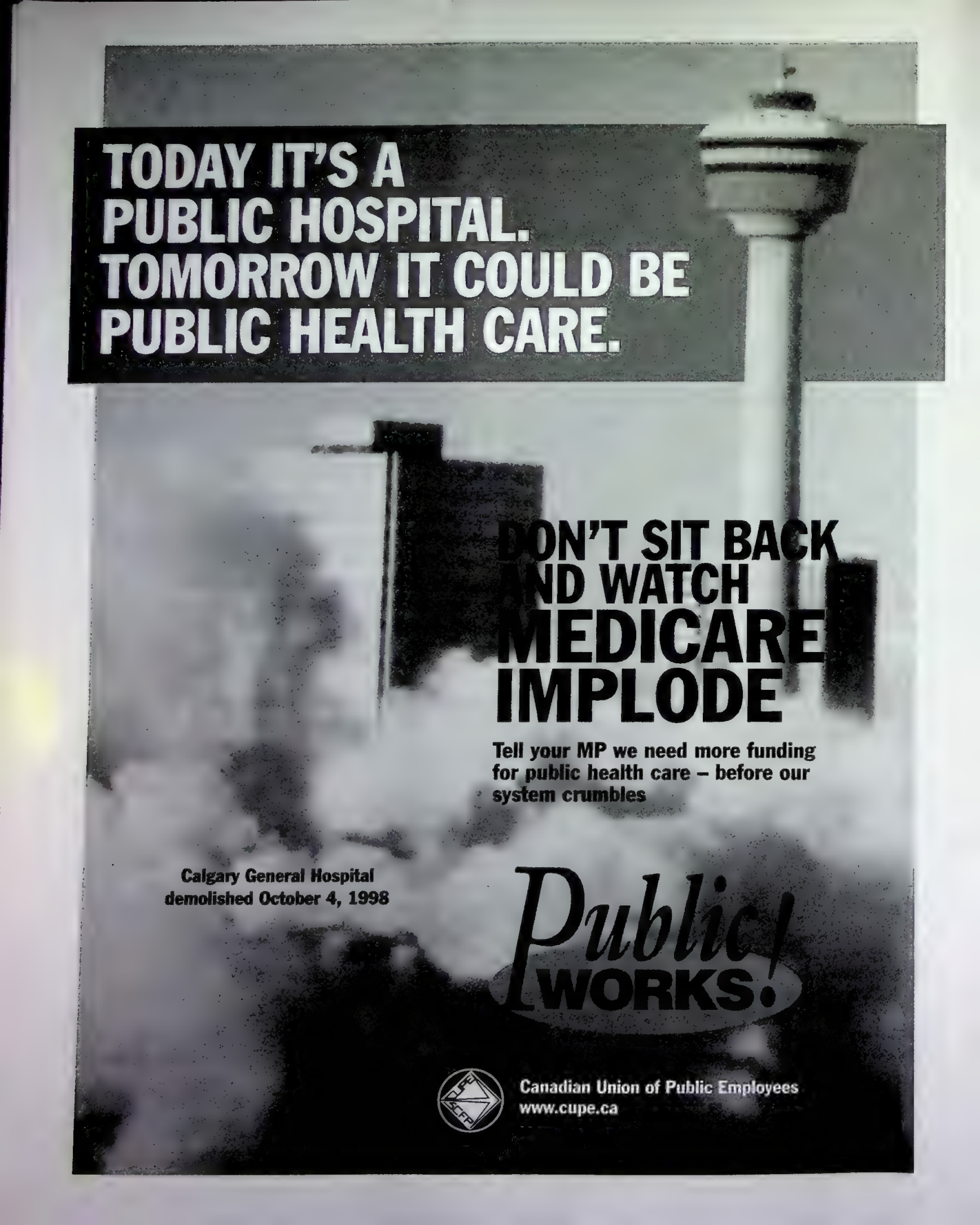
If you are concerned about low wages, job security, health and safety, or benefits, isn't it time you did something about it? Organize...give us a call and we'll show you how.

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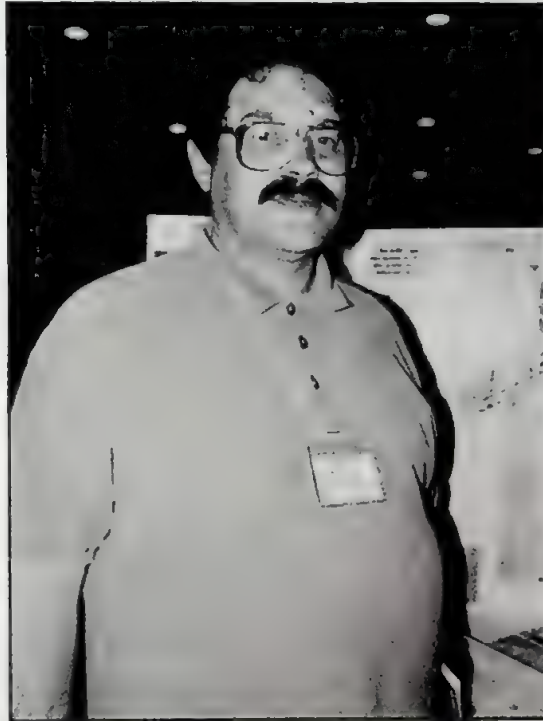
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CANADA Home Sweet Home?

Not if you're a political refugee from the U.S.

by Della MacNeil

Alan Maki and his family made the decision to move to Canada in 1990 knowing their lives were in jeopardy after their children were shot at while waiting for a school bus near Grand Forks, Michigan. The shooting incident capped off a relentless campaign of harassment, intimidation, and violence, reminiscent of the McCarthy era, because Maki was a member of the Communist Party (USA). Eight years after making Marchand, Manitoba their home, the Maki family is fighting for political refugee status and the right to become Canadian citizens.



ily members, friends, co-workers, employers, neighbours and high school teachers. As a result of these actions, Maki was expelled from school, fired from jobs, evicted from homes, sent hate-mail, and, when in need of police protection, he received little support. He was also frequently arrested on charges ranging from spitting on the sidewalk to the final outstanding misdemeanor charge of leaving his dogs loose in their yard at home.

With a Canadian deportation order looming, Alan and his family filed for political refugee status, seeking Canadian citizenship

In November 1997, RCMP and Canadian Immigration officials arrived at the Maki home in Marchand with a deportation order, stating the family was illegally in Canada. Alan Maki, with a modest income from trapping, was told he could no longer work in Canada, his son could not attend school, and the family found themselves unable to apply for government assistance. The people of Marchand quickly came to their aid.

As the history of the McCarthy era bears witness, U.S. law enforcement used Maki's Communist Party membership as a license to conduct a relentless campaign against the family, using the Communist Control Act of 1954 and the National Security Act. Partial documentation released to Maki shows police surveillance started when Alan was only 17 years old. Maki became involved in campaigns for racial integration of schools, the NAACP, Students for a Democratic Society, and anti-Vietnam War protests.

The police not only compiled reports on every detail of Maki's activities, but also harassed and intimidated fam-

ily members, friends, co-workers, employers, neighbours and high school teachers. As a result of these actions, Maki was expelled from school, fired from jobs, evicted from homes, sent hate-mail, and, when in need of police protection, he received little support. He was also frequently arrested on charges ranging from spitting on the sidewalk to the final outstanding misdemeanor charge of leaving his dogs loose in their yard at home.

on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. The Canadian government, as far as we know, has never before granted political refugee status to persons fleeing the U.S. In a move to expedite the process, Canadian Immigration officials granted the family a hearing. Yet, in order for the family to receive a fair hearing, the family must provide evidence supporting their claim of political persecution and documenting the life-threatening circumstances under which they fled. The FBI continues to withhold information from Canadian government officials and the Maki family because they consider them to be a national security risk.

With growing support from city councillors, MPs, MLAs, students, church leaders, First Nations and Metis organizations, unions, and the Marchand community, the family is appealing to the Federal Minister of Citizenship to adjourn their hearing, set for January 9, 1999 in Winnipeg, until they are able to secure the needed documents to state their case. Letters and petitions supporting the fami-

ly's right to a fair hearing, to stay in Marchand as Canadian citizens, as well as appeals for financial support have come from all of these groups.

The Maki family is asking for your support to help them achieve a fair hearing and the right to remain in Canada. You can help by writing the Honourable Lucienne Robillard, Minister for Citizenship and Immigration, 21st floor, 365 Laurier Ave. West, Ottawa ON K1A 1L1. For more information contact The Friends of the Maki Family, 188 Austin St. North, Winnipeg MB R2W 3M6; phone (204) 453-3994; or through their website. www.interlog.com/~almaki

Della MacNeil is a supportive and concerned citizen.



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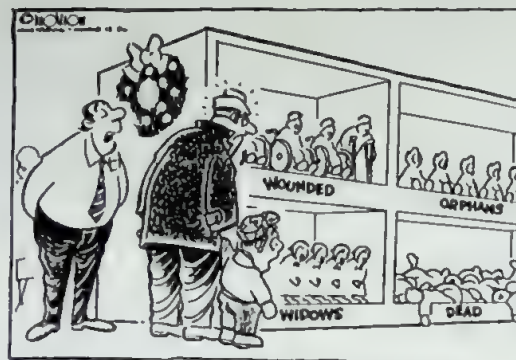
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Tightening the Belt

Labour law "reform" in Mexico.

by Bruce Allen

Mexico's labour laws are among the most progressive in the world. However, the Mexican government doesn't enforce its laws to protect the rights of workers. The government does use these laws to determine whether or not to sanction the activities of a union.

Mexican bosses called for labour law reform following the economic crisis of 1982 and the government's embrace of neo-liberal austerity policies. They realized labour law changes favourable to them would complement this policy shift and help them acquire the work-force they were beginning to realize with more "flexible" collective agreements.

Renewed demands for labour law reform followed in 1989, as the push to negotiate NAFTA intensified, and again in 1994, after NAFTA's implementation. Predictably, the Mexican elite sought changes to enhance their ability to employ and schedule workers as required by a just-in-time manufacturing system. They sought changes to make it easier and less costly to fire workers. They also wanted more limits on the right to strike and to eliminate industry-wide union contracts.

Ernesto Zedillo became Mexico's president in 1995. The prospects for labour law reform favourable to the corporations became brighter because he is an outspoken advocate of it. The changing political situation in Mexico was also conducive to labour law reform because it had become possible for the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to lose power to another party that would enforce the existing labour laws.

A significant obstacle blocked Mexican labour law reform: the government-affiliated unions belonging to the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM). They had long opposed changing the labour laws but, following Zedillo's rise to power, their leaders switched course and sided with



The sign outside this GM plant reads "vacantes" which means the company is hiring workers.

the corporate elite. CTM leader Leonardo Rodriguez Alcaine stated that in the context of globalization Mexican capitalists needed greater competitiveness and this could only be achieved with the higher productivity possible with more flexibility from labour.

The CTM's new position created a powerful alignment of forces favouring labour law suitable to corporate interests including the PRI leadership, the CTM, and the pro-business National Action Party (PAN). The emergence of this alignment of forces set the stage for the government to proceed with labour law reform this year. Talk turned to action as Zedillo's Secretary of Labour and Social Welfare José Antonio Gonzalez Hernandez began consultations with employers and labour organizations on the question.

The Left

The perspectives of the Mexican Left on this issue are diverse. This negates effective opposition to the corporate drive for labour law reform.

Mexico's largest leftist party, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), has advanced proposals for labour law reform that are social democratic in content. The PRD wants to abolish Mexico's system of Conciliation and Arbitration Boards because they are a political instrument

of the PRI. The PRD wants unions to be independent and to have the right to free collective bargaining. It advocates modernizing Mexico's labour laws in ways that will ostensibly benefit both workers and bosses.

The PRD's stance implies that workers can benefit from a process to reform labour legislation advocated by capital and those who represent or are aligned with it. The PRD has taken this position within the context of economic restructuring facilitated by NAFTA, including the deployment of work reorganization strategies designed to optimize manufacturing flexibility. Significantly, the PRD has stopped fighting NAFTA.

The First of May Inter-Union Committee is another leftist organization comprised of independent unions, democratic currents in official unions, poor peoples' movements and leftist parties. The Committee diametrically opposes the corporate position on labour law reform. Given the alignment of forces backing labour law reform, it believes changing the laws is unwise in the current context, a position that makes even more sense if Mexican labour law is viewed in relation to NAFTA.

Mexico's government eagerly accommodates corporations seeking easy access to U.S. markets. Consequently, in Mexico's expanding maquiladora industry, laws designed to protect workers' health and safety and their right to form independent unions are ignored by labour officials

and violated at will by employers. Nonetheless, this official neglect is problematic because NAFTA's side agreement on labour requires each country to enforce its labour laws. Consequently, labour and human rights organizations have responded to Mexico's failure to enforce its labour laws by filing numerous complaints through the body administering the NAFTA labour side agreement. These complaints have focused public attention on Mexico's failure to protect workers' legal rights.

Labour law reform can stifle these complaints. Simply stated, enacting labour laws tailored to the needs of capital will allow the Mexican government to enforce them without discouraging new investment. NAFTA's critics would no longer be able to use the labour side agreement to put pressure on the Mexican government.

If this occurs it will represent a decisive setback for those who stopped opposing NAFTA and opted for trying to use it to make gains for workers. In short, if capital gets the Mexican labour laws it wants, this will make NAFTA more compatible with its interests than it already is. It will also vindicate those who have always said that NAFTA is anti-worker and must be scrapped.

Bruce Allen is a member of the Executive Board of CAW Local 199 and of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras.



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Mermaid Avenue

A CD by Billy Bragg & Wilco

Electra, distributed by Warner Music Canada, 1998.

reviewed by Billy Morton

A folk singer with a history of working class union activism leaves behind a cache of heretofore unpublished lyrics that show a certain frisky tenderness. His daughter wants to have them set to music. Who does she call, but another folk singer with a history of working class union activism, yet known for a certain frisky tenderness in *his* music.

Mermaid Avenue is the brainchild of Nora Guthrie, custodian of the legendary Woody Guthrie archives. Hundreds and hundreds of pages of lyrics from the Coney Island years of the forties and fifties. Music locked in Woody's long dead memory. Handed over to Billy Bragg. Just the man to bring it all back to life.

Teaming up with American roots rockers Wilco, this almost totally dispels any thought of Dust Bowl Ballads. As if that's all Guthrie wrote. Instead of the restless romantic hobo and organizer, we get the restless romantic womanizer. And we even get a bit of the unionist to boot.

Bragg, with Jeff Tweedy and Jay Bennett of Wilco, craft the tunes from the existing words. I can't say for sure what Woody would think of some of the treatments of the music, but if the liner notes are any indication, Nora is one happy camper. I say it's damn near perfect - wistful and playful where it's warranted. Part back porch, part frat party, some rendered in studio perfection, other times sounding somewhat soused, under-rehearsed and basically just how Woody would have done it. Really *real*.

"Walt Whitman's Niece" is a sly call and response, rife with double

entendre. "California Stars" presages everything from the Byrds to Steve Earle, yet years after the fact. "Way Over Yonder in a Minor Key" steals a page from Cisco Houston's "Rovin' Gambler," (or perhaps Cisco hijacked it from Woody).

Guest Natalie Merchant haunts "Birds and Ships" like the ghost of Ronnie Gilbert from the Weavers. "Hoodoo Voodoo" shows us more of the guy who brought us "Ridin' in my Car Car," all jive and play. "She Came Along to Me" is a chant to the battle of the sexes and a kick at the fascists in the bargain.

"At My Window Sad and Lonely" shows Wilco at their best, just as "Ingrid Bergman" is a plinth for a solo Billy Bragg. (Just a hoot. As if I'll ever play "Union Maid" again without thinking of this one.)

"Christ for President" is a sequel or prequel to "Jesus Christ," a logical extension in any case. (Far more so than U2's overwrought version of "Jesus Christ" on *A Vision Shared*).

"I Guess I Planted" is the union song to end all union songs, exploring the correlation between building both songs and unions.

Bragg sits out "One by One," and isn't even missed. That alone is testament to the balance of these collaborators. America gone wrong is captured in "Eisler on the Go," about fellow lefty Hans Eisler getting caught in the web of the McCarthy witch hunt.

"Hesitating Beauty" is a rollicking bluegrass treatment of a plea to a



procrastinating lover while "Another Man's Done Gone" tells of the life of a man, a writer constantly on the move, subtly performed with Bennett's sparse piano and Tweedy's aching vocals. And, while not the strongest entry, "Unwelcome Guest" gives us more of the Woody we think we know. The Robin Hood myth. A man riding to the aid of the downtrodden, on his horse and on borrowed time. Come to think of it, it's pretty damn strong at that.

Being fully convinced that Billy Bragg was the only one to pull this off, and as I wear the disc to dust, I have got to pause and hope that there were hundreds and hundreds of those lyric sheets around. Enough for a couple of more compilations. Or ten.

Billy Morton is a Regina-based actor, musician, songwriter, coffee maker and a hard-core fan of Billy Bragg and "folks" music in general. He will soon be appearing in the CBC miniseries "Big Bear," where he gets deservedly killed, and the feature "Inconvenienced," where he spends a good deal of his screen time in his underwear.

The Globalization of Poverty

The Globalization of Poverty: Impacts of IMF and World Bank Reforms

by Michel Chossudovsky

published by Fernwood Publishing,
P.O. Box 9409, Station A, Halifax NS
B3K 5S3; phone (902) 422-3302,
1998, \$24.95.

reviewed by Theresa Wolfwood

I went back to re-read this important book after I read the article "Whither Asia's Economies" in *Z Magazine*, where Henry Rosemont, Jr. says, "The IMF is but the stalking horse for the MAI.... If implemented, the super-rich will be even more 'free' to exercise their 'rights' world-wide than they currently are in Asia."

Chossudovsky gives us a clear analysis of how the International Monetary Fund has well served this corporate plan. He gives us case studies of the "restructuring" and subsequent impoverishment of the people in countries like Somalia, Peru and Russia. He lays out the blueprint for the rest of the world. We can see how the MAI will further consolidate global corporate power.

Since the recent crises in the Asian and Russian economies, we can no longer believe that these problems are only somewhere else. With the shrinking of our supposedly secure resource export markets and our currency, we see that global forces undermining or destroying domestic production and markets link us together in a dangerously vulnerable situation, more serious than the depression of the thirties or the horrors of the Second World War.

"The globalization of poverty in the late 20th century is unprecedented in world history. This poverty is not, however, the consequence of a 'scarcity' of human and material resources.

Rather it is the result of a system of global oversupply predicated on unemployment and the worldwide minimization of labour costs," Chossudovsky says. This is war against civil society.

He tells us that IMF restructuring requires nations to have an export-driven economy, thus destroying local production at all levels, making the poor desperate for any work, vulnerable to currency changes and unable to feed themselves.

The U.S. and its front agencies step in, giving food aid that subsidizes agri-biz like the giant Cargill and further destroys local farmers. Thus in a world where unsustainable overproduction is one of the main problems, people in the majority world lose food self-sufficiency, earn low wages or none, while we, in the minority world, are turned into consumers of eroded social services while we are taxed to pay for restructuring and the loss of our own democratic rights.

Recently, U.S. Congress demanded that IMF bailouts of Brazil and other countries include MAI-type provisions of free flow of capital - the very conditions that cause national financial crashes. In Cameroon (and soon in Chad), a World Bank-backed oil consortium has won legal status that exceed national powers.

The author relates the process of formation of large economic blocs in Europe and North America and how "the regional and local-level small-scale entrepreneur is uprooted, city life is transformed and individual small-scale ownership is wiped out." He shows us that the process of impoverishing the majority world is the same as that in the rich minority world. The European Union "increasingly heeds dominant financial interests at the expense of the unity of European socie-

ties. In Sweden the downgrading of the Swedish national debt rating was instrumental in the decision of the minority Social Democrat government to curtail core welfare programs, including child allowances and unemployment benefits. Similarly Moody's credit rating of Canada's public debt was a major factor in Canada's 1995-1996 structural adjustment program involving massive cuts in social programs and lay-offs of civil servants." The IMF intimated that other indebted countries could expect the same fate as Mexico after its crisis, where now all oil revenues are paid directly into U.S. banks. And in former communist countries, assets like hotels, schools and cultural institutions were sold for pittances and prices rose as salaries fell or disappeared.

By now the stalking horse has become a posse of Marlboro men sweeping down on any holdouts like the people of Chiapas, East Timor and Cuba, as well as pounding democracy and social justice into the earth in all countries. We must stand together against the MAI and the rest of the bandits with other initials.

Chossudovsky believes the struggle against this tyranny must be globalized, "requiring a degree of solidarity and internationalism unprecedented in world history. The global economic system feeds on social divisiveness between and within countries." He calls for a major thrust "which brings together social movements in all major regions of the world in a common pursuit and commitment to the elimination of poverty and a lasting world peace."

Theresa Wolfwood is a Victoria activist and president of the Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation.

**Pacifism as Pathology:
Reflections on the Role of Armed
Struggle in North America**
by Ward Churchill
Arbeiter Ring Publishing, Winni-
peg, 1998, \$11.95.

reviewed by Colin Hall

Would you kill someone? I don't ask because I'm curious. I ask because it is something we may need to do at some point in our lives. If we are serious about making revolutionary changes in society, then we must look at that possibility. Ward Churchill reflects on violence and the role of armed struggle in this fascinating and easy read from Arbeiter Ring Publishing in Winnipeg.

Originally published as a two-part essay in 1986, *Pacifism as Pathology* examines pacifism for its revolutionary potential or lack thereof. The foundation of Churchill's argument is that those in positions of wealth and power will not loosen their grip on either without a fight. If we are ever to seriously threaten the global capitalist agenda, then some form of armed struggle seems inevitable.

Let me pause here while the committed lobbyists and reformists run for their paper and pens to remind us about the Waffle or the CCF. While they are away I will remind the reader that capitalism with health care is still capitalism. Before they return, let me make absolutely clear that no amount of reform or legislation can replace profit as the sole goal of the corporation. Oh no! they're back. I better get into some analysis before they notice the propaganda.

The essays were written in response to a convention at which Churchill ran a workshop entitled "Demystification of the Assault Rifle," which offered hands-on learning about assault weapons. Conference organizers passed a motion banning any more workshops like that one and banning

anyone *except police officers* from bringing weapons to future conferences.

The tone of the essay is set in the introductory paragraph when Churchill writes "it *would* be nice if everything would just get better while nobody got hurt, including the oppressor who (temporarily and misguidedly) makes everything bad. Emotional niceties, however, do not render a viable politics. As with most delusions designed to avoid rather than confront unpleasant truths (Lenin's premise that the sort of state he created would wither away under 'correct conditions' comes to mind), the pacifist fantasy is inevitably doomed to failure by circumstance."

Churchill then offers a brief historical study of pacifist movements. From the policy of "not alienating the German people any further" to Jewish *Sonderkommandos* who temporarily saved their own lives by helping the SS carry out the Nazi liquidation policy, Jewish resistance offered almost no armed or physical counter-attack to the Nazis.

Churchill studies other pacifist movements like the American Civil Rights Movement as well. He argues that until the Black Panthers made a real and direct threat to the American state, the Civil Rights Movement was marginalized and ignored by white liberals. It wasn't pacifism that won the Civil Rights struggle, but rather the threat of violence that gave credence to the only "responsible black leader."

Churchill makes a convincing and consistent argument that violence must be a tactical option for those of us who honestly want revolution. Committed pacifists may discover, after some reflection, that revolution is not what they really want.

At no time does Ward Churchill suggest that we start stockpiling weapons and building barricades; he does, however, ask us to consider that many

people who share in our struggle have no choice but to do just that. To either ignore or condemn armed struggle as a revolutionary tactic is delusional at best and racist at worst. Pacifism is a luxury that many of our brothers and sisters (mostly outside North America) cannot afford.

Colin Hall is a student activist at the University of Regina.

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- Mike Randall,
spokesperson for Atlantic Lottery Corp., before a race
between sprinter Ben Johnson, two horses, and
supposedly the fastest stock car in the Atlantic
provinces. Randall said none of the racers were tested
for performance-boosting products. The two horses
came in first and second, Johnson third, while the car
brought up the rear.

PASS THE PEPPER

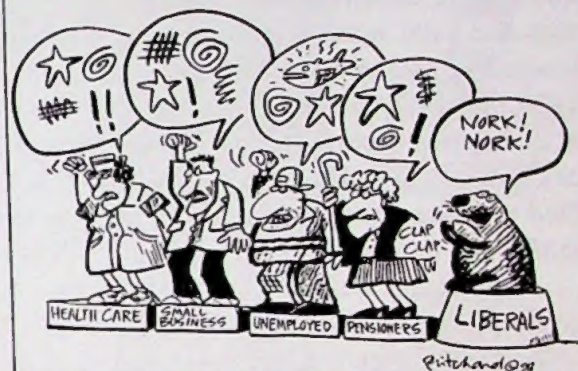
"Instead of taking a baseball bat or something else,
now they are trying to use more civilized
methods."

- Jean Chrétien,
part of his "apology" to a woman who had been
pepper-sprayed at the anti-APEC demonstrations
in Vancouver.



Say WHAT?

Random reaction to Martin's Economic Report...



YOU
CALL
THIS
LONG?

"We are on the brink, I believe, without a shadow of a
doubt, of what is going to be one of the longest periods
of sustained [economic] growth and progress this
country has seen since the Second World War."

- Paul Martin,
Canadian Finance Minister, November 1996. Two years
later, Canada and other parts of the world are entering a
recession, and possibly a world-wide depression.

PINOCHET VERSUS CASTRO

"Cuba's many friends in Canada attack the American
campaign against
Castro as a form of
imperialism. But it
was those same
Americans who
pressured General
Pinochet to step
down. It's odd that we
condemn the one
intervention, but not
the other. It is odder
still that we regard a
dictator [Pinochet]
who took over a
country on the verge of civil war, rebuilt it into a free
and prosperous modern economy, and then
relinquished his power to a freely elected
government as a greater villain than Castro, who



impoverished a rich country (second in Latin
America only to Argentina in 1959), who drove



millions of his people
into exile and
murdered tens of
thousands, who rules
far more ruthlessly
than Pinochet ever
dreamed of, whose
family (it's widely
believed) has
enriched itself in the
international drug
trade, and who is
determined never to
willingly surrender

power - odd, that is, if Canada's Latin America
policy were really based on zeal for democracy."

- David Frum,
National Post columnist, October 27, 1998.

December 6, 1989

Remembering the 14 women massacred in Montreal.

by Genevieve Teed

Although violence against women is an ongoing occurrence in Canada, it was the fatal mass shooting of 14 women in Montreal on December 6, 1989 that focused our attention to it. A committee report from the House of Commons revealed that 119 women died at the hands of their spouses that same year.

Out of the feelings of pain, anger, outrage, disbelief and fear that women experienced has grown a commemoration for these 14 women and the acknowledgement of the prevalence of violence toward women throughout the world. In remembrance, plans for a women's monument were initiated at Capilano College in North Vancouver in 1990-1991. A Vancouver site was chosen and then approved and donated by the Vancouver Parks Board in 1993. The design was selected the following year and the monument was installed last year.

The monument is in Thornton Park on Main and Terminal in Vancouver, the wide boulevard-style park that sits between Main Street and the railway and bus stations.

What you see, as you approach the monument from the street, are 14 bench-like slabs of pink granite from Quebec, equally spaced in a 300-foot circle. The artist, Beth Alber, points out that the horizontal positions of the forms draws attention to the 14 fallen female bodies. Her design serves as a historical reminder of the devastating loss of life nine years ago.

The artist has chosen the circle, which is associated with the idea of protected or consecrated space. Her

theme of protection and consecration is represented by the Circle of Donors. Circling around the forms, positioned on the ground, are clay paving bricks, hand-stamped with the names of 6,000 individual and group donors, a visible acknowledgement for the world to see. At the same time, the artist believes that the Circle of Donors acts as "a protection, a caring gesture."

Also inscribed on the clay tiles are dedications from the 14 families of the women who were murdered.

We are reminded, as we circle the monument and recall the horror of their death, that these were very young women, students. Eleven of them ranged in age from 21 to 25 and of the other three, the eldest was 31.

On the top surface of each bench, there is a slightly textured recessed area, where rainwater will gather, symbolizing a pool of tears. On the outer side of every other bench, a dedication is inscribed in one of seven different languages: French, English, Chinook Jargon (First Nations), Swahili, Hindi, Spanish, and Chinese.

The dedication in each language reads: "The fourteen women named here were murdered December 6, 1989, at the University of Montreal. We, their brothers and sisters, remember and work for a better world. In memory and in grief for all women who have been murdered by men, for all women of all countries, all classes, all ages, all colors."

As the project neared completion, Haruko Okano, jury member and artist, wrote: "The Women's Monument Marker of Change has set a precedent



photo: Carolyn Paver

in North America where perhaps two percent of public art has been designed by women. Marker of Change breaks from traditional monuments. It is consciously anti-monumental in its physical structure. The design for Marker of Change invites the public to go beyond the role of passive observer and asks that they enter the circle, sit and contemplate the message and become the living active component of this monument."

Suzanne Laplante Edward, the mother of one of the murdered women, commented on the project and its relevance: "It is my belief that the Marker of Change will provoke thought, and act as a tangible symbol, a vivid reminder that zero tolerance to violence against women must prevail. Our daughters would be smiling to see such a day."

This is not just another monument, it is a unique memorial produced by volunteers, offering those who care a tangible opportunity to show respect for and to honour all women who have been victims of violence.

The Women's Monument project sends a strong message of hope for a better world.

Genevieve Teed is a senior citizen, a retired social worker, activist and raging granny.



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Council**

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Canadian Auto Workers
1 800 665-7492

*We declare that in memory of the
massacre of fourteen women
at the École Polytechnique in Montreal in
1989, that all violence against women be
condemned and
we further declare to ensure a
zero tolerance policy towards
violence within our unions
and our communities.*



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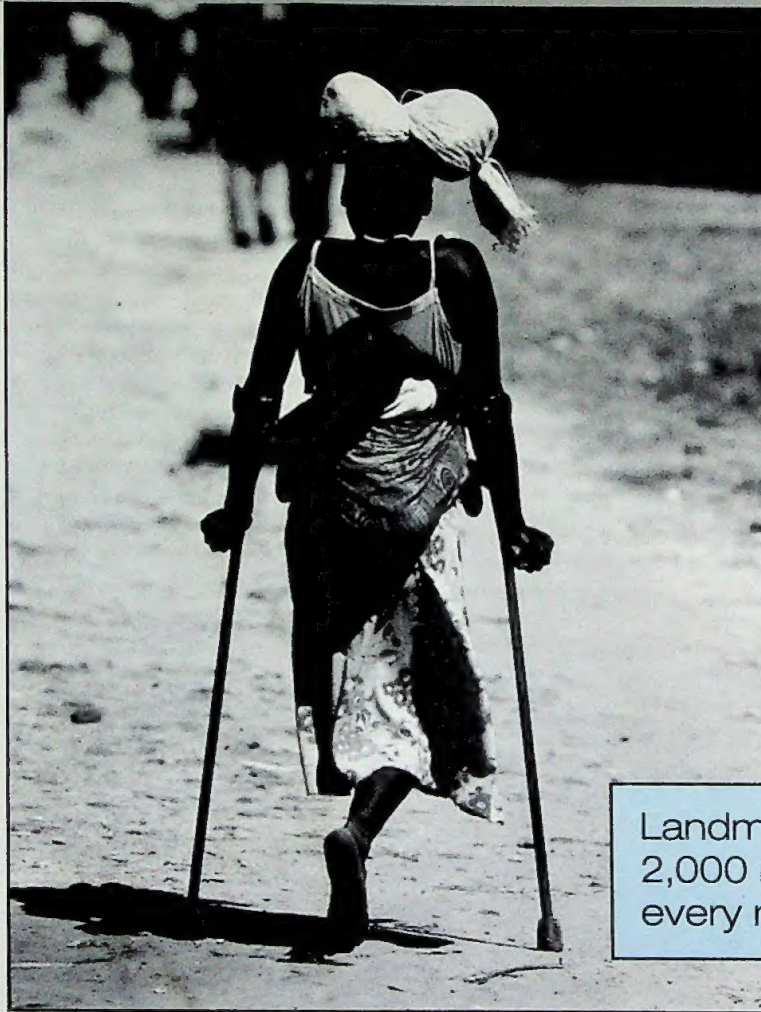
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